



LIVING WELL NEWSLETTER

Issue 8 January/February 2025

North Yorkshire and York

IT IS A NEW YEAR - LET'S GET ACTIVE!

There are numerous benefits of being active and engaging in regular exercise at any age including:

- Improved agility, balance and endurance
- Improved muscular strength and aerobic capacity
- Improved blood pressure and cardiorespiratory performance
- Reduced weight and Body Mass Index (BMI)
- Reduced anxiety
- Increase in self-esteem and improved quality of life.

Barriers: These are some of the reported barriers to accessing organised physical activities and sports.

- Cost
- Transport and difficulties accessing organised activities
- Lack of suitable activities
- Lack of promotion of activities when available

How to encourage physical activity?

- **Making physical activities enjoyable and sociable:** creating a positive atmosphere, planning fun exercises and games (using relevant communication methods), alternating activities to maintain interest, and providing opportunities to work with partners or in groups.
- **Making it manageable:** importance of helping the person to develop a 'habit' by encouraging daily physical activities; building up physical activity gradually.
- **Making it safe:** ensuring equipment and facilities being used are safe, appropriate and reasonably adjusted; individuals' health conditions are taken into account.

Above information is taken from Karen McKenzie and her colleagues' article '[Encouraging physical activity in people with learning disabilities](#)' published Nursing Times in 2018.

Please see the resources section at the end for links to relevant information and easy read materials.

CHECK THESE LINKS FOR ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS IN NORTH YORKSHIRE AND YORK



North
Yorkshire
Sport.

YOU CAN CONTACT [STUART PIERCE](#) FOR SPECIFIC ENQUIRIES IN NORTH YORKSHIRE

SPORTS INCLUSION VIDEO BELOW



ACTIVE AGEING AND PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES - BILD VIDEO



IT IS A NEW YEAR - LET'S EAT HEALTHY!

- People with a learning disability are more likely to have problems with their weight.
- Some people may be underweight because of their disability. They may have difficulties with eating or swallowing.
- People with learning disabilities are more likely to be severely overweight (obese) than people in the general population.
- People who are obese are at much greater risk of health problems such as heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, diabetes and mobility difficulties.
- The two main ways to reduce weight are diet and exercise.
- For most people, bringing their weight down to healthy levels involves both **exercising more** and **eating healthier amounts of healthier foods** as well as **avoiding fattening foods and sugary drinks**.

Barriers to losing weight for people with learning disabilities

- Difficulty in exercising and being active.
- It can take more time to cook a healthy meal than to have a ready meal.
- Some people take medication that makes them put on weight.

Healthy eating for weight management

- **Shopping for food:** support the person you care for to plan their meals a week in advance. Help them to make healthy choices using the [Eatwell guide](#) and write a shopping list together. Using pictures is helpful if they are shopping on their own and have trouble reading. Visit [A Picture of Health](#) or the [Easyhealth](#) website for pictures of healthy foods.
- **Between meals:** encourage the person you care for to make healthier choices when buying snacks, for example, by swapping biscuits for fruit, or sugary drinks for sugar-free squash or water.
- **Out and about:** if the person you care for eats out regularly in a canteen or at a day centre, encourage them to make healthy choices from the menu and ask staff to support them with this.
- **Portion size:** if the person you support eats large portions at mealtimes, encourage them to reduce these slightly. Fill up to half their plate with vegetables or salad at mealtimes.
- **Keep records:** if you feel the person you care for is not eating properly, keep records of the food they eat and the foods they do not, to build up a picture of their eating habits.

Please see the resources section at the end for links to relevant information and easy read materials.

**YOUR GUIDE TO THE EATWELL GUIDE.
VIDEO BELOW:**



**COOKABILITY - ACCESSIBLE RECIPES
VIDEO COLLECTION BELOW:**



**A HEALTHIER ME PACK BY MENCAP
CLICK ON THE IMAGE BELOW:**



MINDFUL EATING - VIDEO BELOW:



An exercise to help us slow down and pay full attention to all of our senses while we are eating.

WHAT IS NEW? CHECK OUT THE NEW WEB PAGE FOR CAMHS (CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES)

What are Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)?

Welcome to our CAMHS webpages where you can find information about how we can help children and young people support their mental health.



THE LEARNING DISABILITY REGISTER

Find out more about the Learning Disability Register

Does your child get extra help at nursery, school or college as they find it hard to learn or do things for themselves at home?

If yes, they may be able to get extra health support from your GP Practice, including an Annual Health Check from the age of 14 onwards.



PLEASE CLICK ON THE IMAGE BELOW FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE LEARNING DISABILITY REGISTER



HAVE YOU HAD YOUR ANNUAL HEALTH CHECK AND HEALTH ACTION PLAN YET?

People with a learning disability often have poorer physical and mental health than other people. This does not need to be the case.

It is important that everyone over the age of 14 who is on their doctor's learning disability register has an annual health check.

Please see the resources section at the bottom for link to relevant easy read materials on Annual Health Checks including a video clip.



OUR COMMUNITY: YORK DOWN SYNDROME SUPPORT GROUP (YDSSG) REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 1193370

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T: 0300 102 0321

FB: <https://www.facebook.com/ydssgevents/>



Who are we?

Our group started in 2012 as a group of parent carers of children with Down Syndrome seeking mutual support from those with similar experiences. Since then, the group has grown to involve approximately 70 families across York and the surrounding area. We provide relevant information and training to the professionals involved with our families across the education, health and social care sectors. We aim to be inclusive, and welcome those with similar learning needs/disabilities and their families. We are grateful to our volunteers and other local community groups who support us.



What do we do?

We network and circulate information of relevance to our families and professionals, by email and on social media. We also provide new parent information packs and resources to local maternity wards. YDSSG is affiliated with two national charities: The national Down's Syndrome Association and Phab. Our links with these charities and others enable us to sign post information and provide opportunities to group members for activities such as supported holidays, adventure activities, wider specialist support and Down Syndrome specific training.



Resources - We host a library of resources – mostly books and training materials which we lend out to families and professionals free of charge. These include many large print fiction books (e.g. Harry Potter, Roald Dahl, David Walliams) and books about supporting people with Down Syndrome – e.g. parent memoirs, and training resources.

Activities - We organise and host both regular and one-off events and activities details of which are as follows:

Chatterbox has been a central aspect of our communication skills support, providing Speech and Language group therapy for primary aged children who have Down Syndrome, with parents or school-based teaching assistants. It has been led by a specialist Speech and Language therapist.

"I've found the sessions really helpful to continue work through the week." (Parent)

Christmas Craft workshops take place in the months leading up to Christmas when members of the group are supported by a local community artist to make decorations for our Christmas tree at the York Minister Christmas Tree festival

Dig It! Our archaeology and history group meets monthly for young people aged 16 plus, who have left school. It is led by a professional archaeologist and supported by a local artist. Recently the group linked with a local heritage group in Skipwith and visited the church's "Ragnarok" stone carvings believed to date from Viking times.

"Dig it, is one of the best things and you get to learn new stuff all through different parts of time and events. I love it when we get out there and search things."

DS Yorkies Our football team comprise of two groups which meet on Monday evenings during school term times and enjoy practicing ball skills under the guidance of our volunteer coaches. The sessions usual finish off with a match against parents.

Sing and Sign Maestros Our sing and sign choir is led by a trained Makaton tutor and a music teacher, the group meet for an hour on Friday evenings during term time. The group was for young people aged 11 plus and older however we have just started a group for younger children as well. The group are also supported by members of the Stamford Bridge Community Choir.

" I really enjoy choir because its good fun. And I like seeing my friends"

"Best time of the week – it always puts a smile on my face and I always leave feeling much better than when I arrive."

Training

Over 2024 we provided workshops and training as follows:

- Teacher training workshops introducing school staff to the learning profile associated with pupils who have Down Syndrome
- Benefits workshop for parents, focusing on benefits for those moving into adulthood
- Occupational therapy drop-ins and workshops which included exploring sensory profiles/needs and supporting aspects of daily living.

YDSSG in the community

Our group are very grateful for the support we receive from the wider community. We were particularly grateful to those who participated in the York 10K, both volunteering to Marshal the course, raising money for us and running the race.

During the summer Nestle employees kindly supported us at an activities day with us which involved games, a conga and lots of fun!

The York Model Railway Engineers have been regular supporters of our group, and kindly host an annual open day for us during which we enjoy riding on their model trains.



INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Let's Get Active

- [Fitness Activity Pack: Helping You to Stay Healthy and Well](#)
- [Leisure Activities for People with Specific Needs – City of York Council](#)
- [Let's Get Active: A guide to physical activity and sport for people with a learning disability – Mencap \(Easy Read\)](#)
- [Sense Active for professionals: Practical information and guidance for care professionals supporting individuals get active.](#)
- [Walking Activities – Mencap guide](#)

Let's Eat Health

- [Healthy Eating Activity Pack: Helpful Information and Fun Activities for People with Learning Disabilities and Families and Carers Who Support Them](#)
- [Obesity and weight management for people with learning disabilities: guidance – Public Health England](#)
- [Managing weight with a learning disability – NHS \(links to useful resources including Easy Read\)](#)
- [Healthy Eating Resources – Mencap \(many links to easy read guidance, recipes, and videos\)](#)

Annual Health Checks

- [Annual Health Checks – NHS England](#)
- [Mencap Annual Health Check Easy Read Guide](#)
- [Your Annual Health Check – what it is and why it is important – NHS \(Useful co-produced video\)](#)

Contact: If you have any queries about this newsletter or any of the topics raised here you can contact us on hnyicb-ny.mhld@nhs.net